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ABSTRACT

The Steering Committee of the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education anticipates a future in which Mississippi is regarded as a state of promise and opportunity. This report discusses the priorities and initiatives of a shared framework for educational, economic, and social progress. All of Mississippi's children and their families, as well as educators, business persons, professionals, the media, and communities will understand and embrace the value of education and training. The state should launch a broad public education campaign to this end. All of Mississippi's children should start school ready to learn, which calls for expanded and improved prekindergarten programs. Mississippi needs to boost the quality of teaching through strengthening university and school partnerships, developing a strategic research plan, improving advanced placement programs, and improving teacher education. Mississippi needs to increase the high school graduation rate and college participation through a number of efforts. Mississippi also must increase participation in adult lifelong learning, worker training, and professional development activities. As a final objective, Mississippi needs to increase its support for university-based research and development and the preparation of students for careers in the new economy. (SLD)

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Building opportunity in Mississippi through higher education

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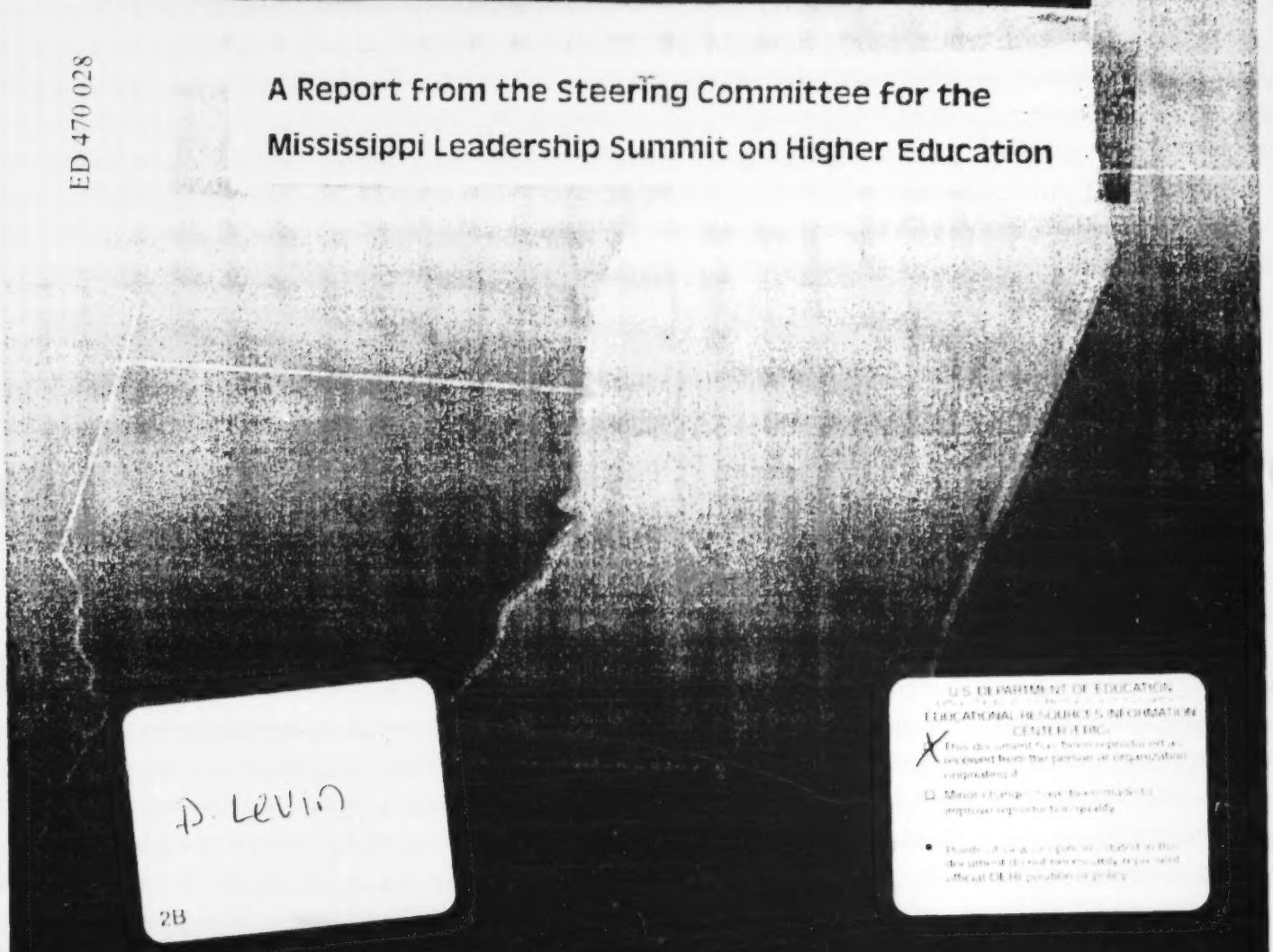
A Report from the Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education



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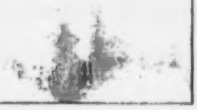
Dear fellow Mississippians:



Letter from the Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education

It is with great pride that we present to you ***Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education****. This report is the product of much thought, discussion, research and debate among the 40-member Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education, as well as many other business and educational leaders from across our state. We hope that you will read it carefully and work with us to make its recommendations a reality.*

We realize that we live in a time of serious national uncertainty and economic challenge. This time of ambiguity and change makes it all the more imperative that we move forward in the task of improving the educational attainment of all Mississippians. It is within our control to build a workforce in Mississippi that will help us retain current industries and attract new ones.

We Mississippians have much to be proud of in our education system and in our colleges and universities in particular. Yet we have much work to do. As the steering committee has declared, we must:

- *raise the educational aspirations of our citizens*
- *ensure that all our children are ready to learn before they enter school*
- *boost the quality of teaching and learning in our elementary and secondary schools*
- *increase high school, college, and university graduation rates*
- *expand adult lifelong learning, worker training, and professional development*
- *increase the level of activity in university research and development, and*
- *create a framework to sustain those commitments and strengthen accountability for the public agenda.*

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In light of the current decline in state revenues, we must be realistic in implementing the priorities and initiatives in this report. We will expect our education system, and particularly our colleges and universities, to be more efficient than ever as they focus resources to achieve the priorities and initiatives contained in this agenda.

Please reflect with us for a moment on what would happen if we actually achieved our goal. Improving educational attainment by all Mississippians would improve the economic situation for the entire state—as well as the social capital and civic capacity of individuals and communities from Pascagoula to Clarksdale.

Only competent and vigorous leaders willing to join forces with a wide cross-section of organizational partners can deliver the highest quality education that Mississippians deserve. Please join with us in the good work of enabling all Mississippians to enjoy greater opportunity through higher education.

Very Truly Yours,

Governor Ronnie Musgrove
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Aubrey Patterson
Steering Committee Co-Chair

January 2002

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Contents

Executive Summary 1

Erasing the Education Deficit 5

A Shared Vision for the Future 9

Building Opportunity:
Priorities, Initiatives, Partners, and Benchmarks 15

Priority One 16

Priority Two 17

Priority Three 19

Priority Four 22

Priority Five 24

Priority Six 26

Sustaining a Public Agenda 29

Higher Education Leadership for Change 33

Appendices

A. A Snapshot of Mississippi Today 35

B. Works Consulted 39

C. Members of the Steering Committee 43

About AGB and the Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance

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Executive summary

Building opportunity in Mississippi through higher education

The Steering Committee foresees a future where Mississippians and their fellow Americans share a view of Mississippi as the state of promise and opportunity. The Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education has worked hard to identify what all of higher education—public and private, two-year and four-year institutions—can do to advance the competitiveness of our state, and to improve the quality of life of our people. Through this package of **priorities** *and* **initiatives**, *our intention is to provide a shared framework for educational, economic, and social progress.*

It will not be easy to implement that framework. We feel, however, that with a concerted and collegial effort, we can make our dream of the future a reality.

Through this package of priorities and initiatives, our intention is to provide a shared framework for educational, economic, and social progress.

1. All of Mississippi's children and their families, along with educators, business persons, professionals, the media, and communities, will understand and embrace the value of education and training, both for their own personal accomplishment, and to develop a more robust state economy.

- **BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS.** Mississippi should launch a broad public campaign directed to all segments of the population, underscoring the importance of high school completion, advanced education, and adult lifelong learning.

2. All of Mississippi's children will start school ready to learn.

- **EXPAND AND IMPROVE PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE.** All Mississippi's children should enter school ready to interact with their peers and teachers, eager to read, and able to begin working with numbers. To accomplish that goal, the state's colleges and universities should partner with schools, social service agencies, and providers; deploy college-student volunteers; and work to establish pilot projects in selected school districts.

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3. Mississippi will substantially boost the quality of teaching and learning in all elementary and secondary schools to better prepare more graduates who are ready to compete in the new economy.

- **ENHANCE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS.** Each college and university should establish three or more partnerships with school districts, with first priority given to those districts ranking lowest on the state's accreditation measures. Each of those partnerships will reflect the particular goals and needs of individual districts and colleges.

- **DEVELOP A SCHOOL-BASED STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN.** College and university faculty should partner with school administrators and teachers to design and conduct research that will address real needs in the classroom.

- **BOOST ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSE OFFERINGS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.** Mississippi's colleges and universities should develop a plan to help each Mississippi public school offer at least one AP course by the fall of 2002, and add one more each year for the next 10 years.

- **EDUCATE MORE AND BETTER TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS—AND WORK TO RETAIN THEM.** Mississippi should increase the supply of teachers in mathematics, science, and technology—curricula vital to educating tomorrow's leaders—and consider developing a business plan to strengthen teacher supply and quality in all academic areas. Furthermore, the state should redouble its efforts to use its technological infrastructure to make sure its teachers and administrators have ample access to the professional development opportunities that will keep them in the classroom. Mississippi also needs to make sure all educators appreciate and understand cultural diversity; and strengthen the skills of teachers and school administrators (especially principals) at the induction and mentoring of new teachers.

The Steering Committee believes that to accomplish this ambitious agenda, Mississippi's policymakers, educators, and citizens will need a sustained effort to gauge their progress.

4. Mississippi will increase high school graduation rates and college participation and graduation rates at all colleges and universities.

- **PROMOTE THE COLLEGE PREP CURRICULUM.** The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, colleges and universities, elementary and secondary schools, and the business community should partner to publicize and disseminate the college prep curriculum and encourage all high school students to complete it.

- **RAISE PARTICIPATION AND GRADUATION RATES** in two-year colleges and universities, especially among first generation college students and African-American students.

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- **RAISE THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE GRADUATES IN CRITICAL CAREER FIELDS** such as science, mathematics, computer science, and engineering. At the same time, the state should continue to cultivate its rich tradition in the arts, humanities, and the social sciences.

5. Mississippi will increase participation in adult lifelong learning, worker training, and professional development activities.

- **INCREASE PART-TIME ENROLLMENT AND ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION.** Mississippi's two-year colleges need to evolve into truly comprehensive community colleges that train highly skilled workers in applied fields, as well as serve a baccalaureate-transfer function.

- **DEVELOP CAREER AND EDUCATION PATHWAY PROGRAMS IN HIGH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES.** Such pathways will link targeted education and training to work-based high school curricula and postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, and transfer to four-year programs.

- **ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO OFFER EMPLOYER-PAID TUITION BENEFITS.**

- **CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE STATE'S HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS,** and reshape educational offerings and outreach strategies to address them.

6. Mississippi will increase its support for university-based research and development, and the higher education community will redouble its efforts to address state and community economic needs, and to prepare students for careers in the new economy.

- **CONTINUE TO INCREASE THE STATE'S SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, AND RESEARCH CAPACITY** to attract and retain high-technology industries, as well as to reenergize Mississippi's traditional industries.

- **DEVELOP PROACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY** that will enable the state's colleges and universities to become full partners in economic development.

- **CONSIDER MATCHING PRIVATE RESEARCH INVESTMENTS WITH STATE MONIES** to support institutionally specific mission-driven research addressing state needs.

The state should consider establishing an education coordinating entity to better align policies and practices across educational sectors.

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To annually assess educational progress at all levels, the state should consider creating a Mississippi Education Progress Board.

The Steering Committee believes that to accomplish this ambitious agenda, Mississippi's policymakers, educators, and citizens will need a sustained effort to gauge their progress. Toward that end, the state should consider establishing an **education coordinating entity** *to better align policies and practices across educational sectors. The body would be composed of the board chairs and chief executives of the Department of Education, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Institutions of Higher Learning, as well as representatives of Mississippi's independent colleges and universities.*

And to annually assess educational progress at all levels, the state should consider creating a **Mississippi Education Progress Board**. *The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, the three executives of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the State Board of Education, as well as three at-large members, should comprise the board.*

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Erasing the education deficit

What the Steering Committee has affirmed

Since May 2001, many of the state's leaders in business, government, and education have worked together to craft this shared public agenda for higher education based on four convictions:

- Education in Mississippi is the key to success in a competitive global economy driven by knowledge and information.
- Mississippi's regional, racial, and cultural diversity can be its strength.
- All Mississippians can benefit from greater economic opportunity if business, government, and higher education work together.
- Education is all one "system," a seamless continuum whose component parts must work together continuously and collaboratively, and in which higher education must take a leadership role more often.

Members of the Steering Committee found few surprises in the often-troubling data on the demographic, economic, health, and social condition of Mississippi. Our state remains below national and southern state averages for adult degree attainment at every level—high school, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate. We still rank last in the number of adults without a high school degree. Despite gains in college attendance, only 36 percent of our high school freshmen enroll in college within four years, compared to 54 percent for the top states, according to a recent national report card on higher education. Those educational deficits help explain why Mississippi ranks last among the states in per-capita income.

"Our people are Mississippi's greatest asset," argued one Steering Committee member, *"but only if they are better educated."*

"Our people are Mississippi's greatest asset," argued one Steering Committee member, *"but only if they are better educated."* Correcting this state's educational deficit will require new efforts targeting everyone from young children preparing for school through working adults learning new skills.

Tackling Mississippi's educational challenges

The Steering Committee realizes that the state is not starting from square one. Tremendous strides have occurred over the last two decades, beginning with the Education Reform Act of 1982 and continuing with the committed work of our political, business, and education leaders. Mississippi communities and organizations are

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trying to tackle each of our educational challenges, in partnership with our schools and our two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

Improving educational attainment by all Mississippians would improve the economic situation for the entire state

- The Board of Education has adopted stringent standards for student achievement; overall educational performance has improved; and policymakers are working together to retain our best teachers by raising teacher salaries.
- The state's 15 community and junior colleges offer higher education within driving distance of most communities—and are moving in the right direction on student transfers to baccalaureate campuses.
- The Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)—eight universities and the medical center—offer undergraduate and graduate degrees to students throughout the state. The comprehensive and regional universities conduct research that supports regional economies—and earn high marks in employer satisfaction with graduates, according to one recent survey.
- Mississippi's fine independent colleges form a significant part of the education services in the state, and contribute to its educational vitality.

But we must do much more if we are to clear a path for all of this state's citizens to achieve greater success—educationally, economically, culturally, and spiritually. Too often students experience schools, colleges, and universities as separate islands characterized by disconnected standards, programs, and services. Too often our schools, colleges, and universities fail to meet the needs of *all* Mississippians. Too often our community colleges serve full-time students, short-changing part-time students and working adults. Across the board—from high schools to universities—graduation rates are alarmingly low.

The Steering Committee recognizes that this is a statewide higher education agenda, but that one size does not fit all: conditions vary dramatically in Mississippi's regions. Each of the initiatives we recommend will require careful tailoring to the very specific needs of the Delta, the Hills, South Mississippi and the Coast, North Mississippi, and the Northeast. The Steering Committee also intends this vision and agenda for higher education to extend over the long term—a period of at least ten years.

The benefits of achieving our goals

Improving educational attainment by all Mississippians would improve the economic situation for the entire state—as well as the social capital and civic capacity of individuals and communities from Pascagoula to Clarksdale.

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To provide just one illustration, opening the doors to greater educational attainment among Mississippi's African-American population would help the bottom line not only for individual families, but also for the state as a whole. Suppose, for instance, that African Americans in the state had the same levels of educational attainment and earnings as the state's white population. Equalizing educational and economic opportunities for black Mississippians would raise the state's total personal income by an estimated $3.8 billion, and the state would realize more than $1 billion in additional tax revenues—without a tax increase.

Of course, if we raised the expectations and educational attainment of *all* Mississippians, the personal and statewide economic gains would be even greater.

Without question, increasing educational aspirations and performance across the state will demand strong leadership, new partnerships, and new ways of doing business.

How can we get from here to there? The starting point for the Steering Committee was to articulate a vision for the state of Mississippi, then to build a public agenda for higher education around that vision.

What is our public agenda for higher education?

First and foremost, our agenda is a list of top priorities for all our colleges and universities, one that will help build a robust economy, educate a strong workforce, improve our schools, and enrich the lives of our children, students, and families.

Several of the priorities are central to the purpose of higher education—strengthening postsecondary participation and graduation rates, ensuring lifelong learning, preparing teachers and school administrators, and conducting research. Other equally important priorities call for our colleges and universities to work more closely with other levels of education: to improve early childhood education; raise the educational aspirations of middle and secondary school students; assist current teachers and school administrators; and enhance the quality of our public schools.

The Steering Committee recognizes that statewide educational improvements will require a united front of state policymakers and public schools, in partnership with the higher education community. Accordingly, the committee has included several suggestions addressing contributions those partners can make.

First and foremost, our agenda is a list of top priorities for all our colleges and universities, one that will help build a robust economy, educate a strong workforce, improve our schools, and enrich the lives of our children, students, and families.

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Finally, the committee calls for a new commitment to coordination among the education sectors, as well as a framework for measuring and reporting on progress toward the public agenda.

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A shared vision for the future

The Steering Committee foresees a future where Mississippians and their fellow Americans share a view of Mississippi as the state of promise and opportunity. We envision a Mississippi that markets and takes advantage of its marvelous assets of location, social civility, educational and cultural institutions, quality of life, climate, and a willing workforce.

Working together, the state's leaders and citizens can attract and create new industries and grow existing businesses. In turn, the state can retain the best and brightest of its college graduates and young professionals, and draw talented entrepreneurs and professionals from other states.

Fast-paced global competition requires states, communities, and workforces that can respond quickly and completely to changing conditions. Thus the fast-forward economy in which Mississippi finds itself demands rapid, responsive economic and educational-investment decisions by both the private sector and public policymakers.

With this report, the Steering Committee provides a shared framework within which Mississippians can meet those challenges through timely, informed decisions and carefully implemented actions.

The hallmark of our vision for Mississippi's future is that every citizen will have access to opportunity—educational, economic, and social.

Mississippi: a state of promise and opportunity

The hallmark of our vision for Mississippi's future is that every citizen will have access to opportunity—educational, economic, and social. Business, education, government, the nonprofit sector, and individuals in their communities will actively collaborate in support of that vision.

Education will be at the center of the state's strategic economic development, creating a better life for all Mississippians. Mississippi will lead the nation in fostering harmony among diverse racial and ethnic groups.

All Mississippians will have lifelong educational opportunities. An efficient, productive, and competitive system of public and private institutions will deliver educational services at all levels.

Mississippi's homegrown technology industry—and the state's historic strengths in manufacturing, agriculture, and the services sector—will provide the foundation for developing new business opportunities for the state's workforce.

The K-12 public education system will be effective in all regions of the state. All citizens, including youth and adults, will have access to the tools required to attain high levels of workforce readiness, as well as written and quantitative literacy.

Citizens seeking educational opportunities throughout their lives and careers will create a new level of demand for educational services. The educational system will actively reach out to serve non-traditional students and adult learners seeking degrees, certificates, and continuing education. The system will provide students and employers with on-site delivery and education and training tailored to their needs.

More students and adult learners will complete their programs of study, resulting in increasing numbers of diplomas, certificates, and professional degrees for our citizens. And they will learn and study within institutions that are models of racial harmony.

The system will reward high-performing teachers and administrators with adequate salaries, safe and productive work environments, and the general support necessary to do their jobs effectively. Well-educated Mississippians will have access to good jobs, spurring their desire to remain in the state and contribute to the state's growing success.

Mississippi's homegrown technology industry—and the state's historic strengths in manufacturing, agriculture, and the services sector—will provide the foundation for developing new business opportunities for the state's workforce. Proactive partnerships between education and business will help strengthen those opportunities. In addition, a growing number of national and international companies will locate new business operations in Mississippi. The state will be competitive in the new economy, and its citizens will not be left behind in the information age. The results: higher standards of living, continued growth in per-capita income, and stronger communities.

The people of Mississippi will have a positive, realistic self-image. They will welcome challenges and embrace success. The state will rise in national comparisons of health, social, educational, and economic indicators—and other states will emulate specific success stories. Single parenthood and teenage pregnancy rates will drop dramatically. The state will value and reward cultural differences and diversities, and will demonstrate the benefits of racial harmony.

Committing to shared goals

By working together to raise expectations at each educational level, Mississippians can contribute to a new generation of well-educated citizens deeply engaged in a strong, competitive economy.

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Creating higher expectations at all levels

Mississippians must work together to break the "failure cycle." Creating higher expectations at each educational level—including challenging aspirations among all citizens for a high standard of living and personal achievement—will raise performance by students, teachers, and educational institutions. Meeting that challenge will require such efforts as:

- **Supporting high quality pre-kindergarten and early education programs,** which are essential for students to enter school ready to learn.
- **Improving teacher education and compensation,** which will improve student performance—and ensure that the best educators continue to serve Mississippi's needs.
- **Fostering within students the desire to work hard and achieve at their highest individual levels,** challenging students to achieve high standards—and providing them with the support they need.
- **Dramatically increasing the state's literacy rate in mathematics and language skills,** which will enhance employment and educational opportunities.
- **Aggressively marketing college opportunities and financial aid programs,** which will make more Mississippians aware of their educational options.

By working together to raise expectations at each educational level, Mississippians can contribute to a new generation of well-educated citizens deeply engaged in a strong, competitive economy.

Strengthening education, training, incomes, and the economy through cross-sector partnerships

Business, education, government, the nonprofit sector, and individuals in their communities will strengthen existing partnerships in pursuit of explicit, shared educational, economic, and workforce goals and measurable outcomes. Those efforts—and new collaborations—will include:

- **Creating a quality workforce** to strengthen current businesses and put Mississippi on the radar screens of firms making expansion, relocation, or new plant-siting decisions. The result: more and better opportunities for well-educated workers.
- **Addressing the general education and job-specific training needs of traditional as well as non-traditional students.** The result: meaningful in-state employment at good wages, creating higher incomes and, in turn, more tax revenue.

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- **Developing a statewide economic development cluster strategy**. Such regionally based initiatives will include supporting existing companies with growth potential, building on the recent successes in attracting new, high profile businesses, and boosting efforts to diversify the state economy. The result: Mississippi will capture more growth opportunities in rising business cycles, and achieve broader stability during economic downturns.

- **Building on successes in linking university research to economic and public service needs**, as well as graduating students in high-demand fields.

- **Ensuring that professionals trained in Mississippi stay in Mississippi**. Teachers, health care workers, and information technology workers will contribute to the business, education, health care, and information needs of the state—as well as to the state economy as a whole.

- **Reducing competition between regions**, as well as turf battles among the education sectors. The state's regional diversity is an important asset—and the education sectors can collaborate to focus resources on specific needs.

- **Quantifying through clear and consistent comparative data** where Mississippi's performance stands today, and developing benchmarks to measure progress over time.

Leveraging assets—and tackling challenges

Mississippi is a state with many unique and enduring assets.

Mississippi is a state with many unique and enduring assets. A successful effort to forge a shared public agenda will leverage the state's many strengths—effective leaders and citizens, the state's businesses and educational institutions, as well as an improving quality of life—and realistically address the state's barriers.

Mississippi's assets can help achieve the vision...

The state's strongest assets are its people—and their civility, industry, community spirit, and spiritual values. Taken together, those characteristics suggest great potential for positive change and growth and development within the state and among its people.

- The state also benefits from leaders who recognize where problems exist, and who care deeply about the good of the state.

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- There is an ever-increasing awareness among the business community of the value of education, not only for their employees, but also for the state as a whole.

- The state's infrastructure is an asset, including the programs and research capacity of its colleges and universities.

- Technology is enhancing business opportunities—and life in general.

- There is an eager and willing workforce that can rise to the demands of a new economy and to the recent successes in attracting new industries.

- The state has made important strides in standards-based education reform upon which new initiatives in other sectors can build.

- The state's climate, history and culture, natural resources, and its location in the mid-South and on the Gulf of Mexico are increasingly and broadly recognized as assets.

...but some barriers and challenges could hinder achievement of the vision

Unfortunately, not all people feel connected in the state. Too many are poor, ill housed, underemployed or unemployed. A large segment of the population lives on the margins, with little or no community or family support.

- There is a need for better understanding among groups and races. A place-bound mentality can hinder personal and public policy choices—and statewide progress.

- Too often a fear of change, or lack of aspirations and motivation for education or a better job hinder individuals' progress. Change will require transformational thinking, as well as doing some things differently.

- The state sometimes suffers from feelings of inferiority, fueled in some instances by a lack of adequate and consistent resources.

- Education too often operates in separate silos, each with its own entrenched bureaucracy, and is too often unable to address the state's challenges in timely or adequate ways.

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Building opportunity

Mississippi: the state of promise

The Steering Committee foresees a future where Mississippians and their fellow Americans share a view of Mississippi as the state of promise and opportunity. Mississippi's Leadership Summit on Higher Education has worked hard to identify what all of higher education—public and private, two-year and four-year institutions working in close partnership with the schools, the private sector, and state government—can do to advance the competitiveness of our state, and to improve the quality of life for all our people.

In this section, we present six priorities aimed at achieving our goals for Mississippi's educational system. Taken together with the initiatives, suggested benchmarks, lead agencies, and priority partners, they offer great promise for the future we envision. Education alone cannot solve all of Mississippi's economic, social, and health problems, of course, but it is a necessary element in tackling each of them. And these priorities offer a way to do so.

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Priority One Lead Agency: Education coordinating entity

Priority Partners: Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the State Board of Education in partnership with school districts, private colleges and universities. Public relations firms and news organizations. Offices of the Governor and legislative leaders, business and civic organizations, and leading Mississippians in the arts and entertainment.

Benchmarks:

- Increase Mississippi's high school graduation rate.
- Increase the percent of Mississippi high school graduates who complete the ACT-recommended core course curriculum (four years of English and three years each of mathematics—algebra and above—social sciences, and natural sciences).
- Increase Mississippi's college-participation rate.
- Increase the attainment of bachelor's degrees.

priority one

All of Mississippi's children and their families, along with educators, business persons, professionals, the media, and communities, will understand and embrace the value of education and training, both for their own personal accomplishment, and to develop a more robust state economy.

Education alone cannot solve all of Mississippi's economic and social problems, of course, but it is a necessary element in tackling them. Thus the state needs to build on its educational successes to strengthen its competitiveness within the region, the nation, and the world.

INITIATIVE 1A: Build public awareness through a broad public campaign.

Mississippi should launch a broad public campaign directed to all segments of the population, and underscoring the importance of high school completion, advanced education, and lifelong learning.

A new education coordinating entity—which will include the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Mississippi Department of Education, as well as the independent colleges of Mississippi (see Priority Six as well)—should coordinate a long-term campaign. The campaign partnership should build on the strong foundation established through the collaboration of IHL, the *Clarion Ledger*, and others in the current College Fair campaign, and should include leaders from public and private colleges and universities, business, state and local governments, civic organizations, and the news media. The campaign should market graduating from high school and attending postsecondary education as the keys to future success. The campaign coordinators should work closely with each of the state's regions and communities of interest to ensure that the broad messages are tailored for maximum impact.

The campaign should present information on the benefits of obtaining a postsecondary education, the types of institutions and degree programs that are available, the academic preparation and other requirements necessary to pursue a postsecondary education, and financial aid information.

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The campaign should be staffed and funded through private and in-kind donations by individuals and businesses, supplemented as needed by colleges, universities, school districts, and modest state appropriations. Specifically, the state higher education boards' and public and private institutions' admissions and public affairs staff should partner with school of communications faculty, public relations firms and news organizations to develop and implement a campaign that builds on existing educational outreach and communications efforts. The campaign should expose students to a broad array of successful individuals, as well as to opportunities for personal achievement. The target audience should be all parents and elementary and secondary students, with a particular emphasis on underserved communities and populations.

priority two:

All of Mississippi's children will start school ready to learn.

Recent research on the human brain has unlocked what early educators have attested to for decades: early experiences set the stage for success in school and in life. Childcare, which once was viewed only as a safe haven for young children, should become an environment for both care and early learning.

Mississippi must work harder to support early learning in a supportive setting, both to close achievement gaps and to ensure that all of Mississippi's children are prepared to meet high educational standards.

Priority Two Lead Agency: State Board of Education

Priority Partners: The Department of Human Services, county human-service agencies, The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Institutions of Higher Learning.

Benchmarks:

- An increase in the number of student-volunteer hours performed that are focused on early childhood education.
- Children in early childhood pilot programs will demonstrate higher levels of preparedness when they begin kindergarten.

INITIATIVE 2: Mississippi should help expand and improve pre-kindergarten programs for children in all areas of the state.

To improve student performance, Mississippi should initiate a comprehensive program that helps children come to the first grade ready to learn. Mississippi's youngest citizens should enter school ready to interact with their peers and teachers, be eager to read, and be able to begin working with numbers.

The most successful early childhood programs make use of public, private, school, and community and home-based providers, as the Education Commission of the States has affirmed. Comprehensive approaches embrace both educational and social support for

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children and their families. Collaboration across systems and institutions ensures quality, access, and parental involvement by fully leveraging federal, state, and private dollars. Among the leading states in the south in early childhood education are North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama, according to ECS.

But a comprehensive, high-quality pre-kindergarten program won't come cheap. To help implement an affordable Mississippi solution, the state's colleges and universities should:

- Partner with schools and social service agencies to improve pre-kindergarten programs through research and service;
- Work with unlicensed day-care providers to help improve their offerings;
- Deploy college-student volunteers engaged in service-learning opportunities, such as the Campus Link programs; and
- Seek private financial support to begin pilot projects that will demonstrate the educational value of early childhood education in up to six selected school districts.

In concert with that initiative, college and university faculty in education, psychology, and social work should work across departments and institutions to develop a strategic, statewide action research agenda to support improved learning and social support for all of Mississippi's children. The state can build on existing partnerships between the state's leading colleges of education and leading early childhood education researchers across the country. Specifically, the state should consider marshalling state or corporate and foundation resources to invest in a proven analytic model that could be applied to conditions in Mississippi with the goal of crafting an optimum public/private financing mechanism to support universal, high-quality early care and education for Mississippi children, birth to age five.

priority three

Mississippi will substantially boost the quality of teaching and learning in all elementary and secondary schools to better prepare more graduates who are ready to compete in the new economy.

While there are high-performing schools and superb teachers in Mississippi, and some progress has been made since enactment of the Education Reform Act of 1982, overall school performance falls below national and regional norms. That deficiency is a disservice to the people of the state who are unable to fulfill their potential because schools demand too little of them.

Mississippi must continue to strengthen all of the elements of its elementary and secondary education system—including the people who teach and administer within that framework. Our recommendations here focus on the ways Mississippi's colleges and universities can contribute through strengthened research, partnerships, and teacher education.

INITIATIVE 3A: Enhance school partnerships.

Each college and university should establish three or more partnerships with school districts. School partnerships, which can take many forms, are a two-way street: they enable school administrators and teachers to strengthen their offerings, helping students to boost their achievement. And they provide college administrators and faculty (from all academic disciplines and the schools of education) with opportunities to learn what's needed to strengthen the effectiveness of teacher education, induction, professional development, and research. Schools ranking lowest on the state's accreditation measures should be the first targets for such partnerships.

INITIATIVE 3B: Develop a school-based strategic research plan.

As part of the established partnerships of 3A, college faculty should engage school administrators and teachers to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for action research that will address real needs in the classroom, college, and university. That planning process should identify best practices on priority topics, and should develop a system for getting that information into the hands and minds of teachers and administrators.

Priority Three Lead Agency: Education coordinating entity

Priority Partners: The Board of Trustees of the IHL, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the State Board of Education in partnership with school districts, private colleges and universities. Business administration and public administration program administrators and faculty, business community leaders, and master teachers.

Benchmarks:

- Increase the number of graduates in critical teacher fields.
- Increase the number of graduates in critical technical fields.
- Increase the number of required student-teaching hours.
- Increase the retention of teachers and school administrators.
- Each Mississippi public school should offer at least one AP course by the fall of 2002, and add one more each year for the next 10 years.

In addition, the process should identify knowledge gaps that particularly affect schools in Mississippi. That gaps analysis should then become a roadmap for college and university faculty and doctoral research—action research that should be done in the classrooms that need the most help. Possible areas for research include middle school student performance, school dropouts, the responsibilities of parents for their children's education, and student competencies in math, science, and technological literacy.

INITIATIVE 3C: Boost Advanced Placement course offerings.

Among other efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in Mississippi's schools, the Board of Trustees of Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning cooperatively with the State Board of Education should aggressively pursue federal funds to help increase Advanced Placement course offerings throughout the state. While 60 percent of the nation's public schools offer AP courses, only 36 percent of Mississippi's do. Thus Mississippi's colleges and universities should develop a plan to help each Mississippi public school offer at least one AP course by the fall of 2002, and add one more each year for the next 10 years.

Offering AP courses strengthens the aspirations and performance of *all* middle school and high school students and their teachers, not just of those students who take the courses. Students who do not enroll in AP classes reap the benefits of the better teaching and curricula required to support AP-level studies, while teachers enjoy a more challenging classroom experience.

As is taking place in twenty-six other states, IHL and the Department of Education should earmark a portion of their state general fund budgets to help schools cover exam-fee payments, grants for teachers' professional development related to AP courses, instructional materials, equipment, and other incentives to stimulate program participation—particularly among underserved groups. IHL and the Department of Education should work with school districts to ensure that AP credits count toward college graduation.

In partnership with the Department of Education, the IHL should take the lead in ensuring that teams of university and high school faculty members work together to establish common standards in the context of the AP program. Those teams can also facilitate a common understanding of the AP assessment process, and build a bridge toward greater Mississippi involvement in the national AP standards setting, assessment tool development, and grading processes. Where necessary, IHL should work with schools of education to develop targeted professional development offerings to train teachers how to teach AP courses and participate fully in the AP program.

INITIATIVE 3D: Educate better teachers and school administrators—and work to retain them.

The steering committee feels that one of the most effective ways to improve K-12 education is to ensure school administrators are effectively prepared and supported. There are many activities that the state and the schools can pursue to achieve that goal, but colleges and universities can and should do the following:

- Design better pre-service and in-service training for school principals, through a coordinated approach among IHL institutions, community colleges, and the Department of Education.
- Provide opportunities for professional development (as noted in Priority Five below regarding adult learners).
- Make full use of the state's leading-edge technology to provide both pre-service and in-service training.

Mississippi's colleges and universities take their teacher-education roles very seriously and, like most institutions across the country, have made efforts to strengthen the preparation of teachers. In fact, Mississippi does comparatively well in the number of teachers with national board recognition, but there is still much to do, including ensuring that all teachers appreciate and understand cultural diversity. Those that have not yet revamped their programs should do so to minimally include the following proven approaches:

- **Heightened exit standards** for teacher-education graduates, including competency in the uses of educational technology, which should be announced well in advance.
- **Greater support for teachers** through a lengthened induction program, more in-service opportunities, and formal mentoring programs for all new teachers.
- **Expanded financial inducements,** such as scholarships and loan forgiveness programs, for talented students who plan to teach mathematics, science and technology, and for those who serve in targeted geographic locations. Such inducements would supplement the Mississippi Teacher Corps and Teach for America, both of which provide teachers for underserved areas of the state.
- **Fuller use of the state's leading-edge technology infrastructure** to offer all courses required for alternative certification and a master's degree in education. The state's extensive interactive-television network—encompassing 150 interac-

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tive electronic classroom sites and more than 1000 downlink sites—also should be used for mentoring, in-service training, certification, and completing master's degrees.

Following release of the Public Education Forum Task Force report on teacher education, the IHL, state board for community colleges, and the Department of Education should consider convening a team of the state's top business administration and public administration program administrators and faculty and business community leaders. That team would work with institutional presidents and those teachers that possess national board certification to **conduct a 90-day statewide market analysis/business plan for strengthening teacher supply and quality**—from the recruitment of diverse and well-qualified candidates to educational offerings, teacher induction, mentoring, and professional development.

priority four:

Mississippi will increase high school graduation rates and college participation and graduation rates at all colleges and universities.

Many of Mississippi's high school graduates attend college—proportionately more than other southern states, and in numbers equal to the national average. And progress is being made on boosting African-American students' college going and graduation. But graduation rates still vary significantly across the state's regions and races. Mississippi must act now to end those disparities.

INITIATIVE 4A: Promote the college prep curriculum for all who can profit from it.

The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, colleges and universities, elementary and secondary schools, and the business community should join together to publicize and disseminate the college prep curriculum and encourage *all* high school students to complete it. The public campaign should emphasize what students must do in high school to succeed in college, expanding on the current IHL flyer that goes to high school counselors and students. The community and private colleges should issue similar publications.

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INITIATIVE 4B: Raise the participation and graduation rates in two and four-year colleges and universities, especially among first-generation college students and African-American students.

To improve student retention and timely degree completion, institutions should:

- Enhance academic and financial-aid advising, and increase interaction between faculty and students.

- Develop a refined student-monitoring system that examines indicators ranging from high school student college-core curriculum completion to college students' reasons for dropping out should help Mississippi high schools and colleges improve college-going and retention rates. Part of that monitoring system should include a systematic approach for providing information to secondary schools about how their graduates do in the first year of college.

- In addition, the IHL should continue to pursue federal funding to support partnerships between schools and colleges to interest middle school and high school students in attending college. With or without federal support, such programs can bring academically at-risk students to campuses during the summer, evenings, and weekends to expose them at an early age to college opportunities.

- Lastly, the early success of the virtual community college is encouraging, but to strengthen access further, the state should expand distance-learning opportunities through Mississippi EdNet. With 150 interactive electronic classroom sites and more than 1000 downlink sites, the system can be used to increase the availability of certificate and degree programs.

INITIATIVE 4C: Raise the number of college graduates in critical career fields of science, mathematics, computer science, and engineering, but continue to cultivate graduates who can sustain Mississippi's culture and successes in the liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences.

There is an urgent need to produce the technical graduates required for high-tech industries. At the same time, the ideas, inspirations, communications and interpersonal skills acquired in the arts and humanities also provide the communications, and analytic capabilities crucial to the success of modern business organizations—and to productive citizenship. The business community and the state need to join forces to create incentives for students to take challenging coursework in quantitative, high-demand fields. Industry-supported scholarships and other forms of aid, state underwriting of loan forgiveness programs, and university/business partnerships leading to more paid

Priority Four Partners: The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the State Board of Education in partnership with school districts, private colleges and universities, and the business community.

Benchmarks:

- **Reduce the high-school dropout rate.**

- **Raise Mississippi's college graduation rate to the southern average by 2010 and exceed it by 2015.**

- **Raise the degree attainment for African-American students to the average for all students—and the rate for all regions to the state average—by 2015.**

- **Achieve the southern average by 2010—and exceed it by 2015—for high school, associate, and baccalaureate degrees.**

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internships and cooperative education programs will all be essential to increasing the number of graduates in critical fields.

Priority Five Lead Agencies: The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Institutions of Higher Learning.

Priority Partners: Individual institutions, the Stennis Space Center, the Mississippi Employment Security Commission, and the Mississippi Census Data Center.

Benchmarks:

- Increase the number of students age 25 and above enrolled in post-secondary education.
- Increase the number of students taking courses at work-site locations.
- Increase the available number of professional development opportunities.
- Establish a benchmark to measure increases in the number of Mississippi businesses providing employer-paid tuition to their employees.

priority five

Mississippi will increase the participation of its citizens in adult lifelong learning, worker training, and professional development activities.

While Mississippi's colleges and universities do offer off-campus programs for part-time students and adults, they do so without adequate or equitable funding. As a consequence, those programs, which serve the needs of the incumbent workforce and the priorities of businesses that need to upgrade their employees' skills, are not as fully developed as they must be to support a dynamic economy.

INITIATIVE 5A: Increase part-time enrollment and adult education

Mississippi's two-year colleges need to develop into truly comprehensive community colleges that not only serve a baccalaureate transfer function, but provide highly skilled workers in applied fields as well. The state has made great progress in recent years in helping to prepare Mississippi's workforce, bolstered by the path-breaking Mississippi Workforce Training Act of 1994. But the state's community colleges have to further boost part-time enrollment of Mississippi's adult workforce, those who cannot or choose not to attend college full-time to upgrade their knowledge and skills. Much of that education and training must occur on-site at the workplace or through distance education. At the same time, the community colleges should continue the important mission of providing baccalaureate transfers to Mississippi's four-year institutions.

America's community colleges usually enroll one-half or more of their students part-time, but Mississippi's are an anomaly. Approximately two-thirds of our community college students are full-time, which means that Mississippi's colleges are not providing enough short-term training for adult workers who need to upgrade their skills in a competitive and changing economy. It also means that our community colleges are not providing for the education needs of citizens who need the part-time training most.

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The workforce needs of the state's businesses—as well as the aspirations of low-income working families—**demand that the state change its budget formula to enable Mississippi's community colleges to serve more part-time students**. Specifically, the state needs to support state-equivalent FTE funding for part-time students and for non-credit, job training for working adults.

The senior colleges and universities have major responsibilities for providing relevant educational opportunities for adult and part-time students. Indeed, the advanced technical and professional education required of the new economy is in most states primarily available from four year and graduate institutions. Specifically, the IHL should build on its February 2001 report, *Mississippi Adult Learners as Lifelong Learners*, by establishing a statewide initiative of all its institutions that would focus upon the professional development of the current workforce—whether attending college on campus, at work-site or other locations, or electronically.

INITIATIVE 5B: Develop career pathways, linking targeted education and training to work-based high school curricula and postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, and transfer to four-year programs.

Mississippi should begin developing career and education pathway programs—sequential series of related courses that provide an in-depth experience in a high-demand career area of interest to a student—in high schools and community colleges. By completing a career pathway, students gain insight and technical skills in a career area of interest. Some postsecondary programs go so far as to issue "passports" and "entry" or "exit visas" to employment and college milestones.

INITIATIVE 5C: Mississippi colleges and universities should encourage employers to offer employer-paid tuition benefits, and employees to take advantage of them.

Employer-paid tuition benefits—permanently extended by Congress in 2001—intended for employees who wish to attend college part-time to complete a degree, upgrade their skills, or attain advanced training to be eligible for promotions, are tax-free to employees. All businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations should encourage employees to attend college part-time—or offer on-site training—to complete their degrees, seek certification, upgrade skills, or obtain additional advanced training. In addition, universities and colleges should inform citizens of the availability and benefits of continuing education.

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INITIATIVE 5D: Partner with others to conduct a study of the state's human resource needs.

The Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Department of Education should consider partnering with the Stennis Space Center, the Mississippi Employment Security Commission, and the Mississippi Census Data Center to conduct a study of the state's human resource needs in all sectors of the economy—but especially in science and technology—and compare those needs with the numbers and skill levels of graduates actually being produced. Those data should be reported to the Educational Progress Board, and could be a way to get all educational sectors to refine their programmatic offerings and outreach strategies.

priority six:

Mississippi will increase its support for university-based research and development, and the higher education community will redouble its efforts to address state and community economic needs, and to prepare students for careers in the new economy.

Mississippi's research universities have a strong track record in attracting federal support. Enlightened political leaders and talented scientists bring millions of dollars to Mississippi to conduct applied research, which, in turn contributes to the state's economic development, and prepares upper-division and graduate students in high-tech fields. Mississippi needs to expand that leadership role to an increasing use of university-based research to create new products, processes, and services that can be commercialized by the state's business community.

INITIATIVE 6A: Continue to increase the state's scientific, technical, and research capacity to attract and retain high-tech industries, as well as to reenergize Mississippi's traditional industries.

High-tech professionals do much creative work in the new economy—and industry and faculty research supplies the ideas that produce its inventions and innovations. Mississippi has made progress in both arenas, but is not performing well enough to remain competitive in the global economy. The Mississippi Technology Alliance, a public/private

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partnership, has identified five technology clusters critical to the state and its major regions: advanced materials; transportation; life sciences; communication/information technology; and remote sensing. Those clusters support existing and expanding industries, and also fit well with the educational and research mission of the state's research universities.

Mississippi's research universities do very well in securing federal research dollars, but it is incumbent on all the universities in the state to:

- Increase the dollar volume of sponsored research, especially in engineering, science, technology, and telecommunication; and
- Raise the number of graduates in mathematics, science, computer science, engineering, and technology.

Mississippi colleges and universities should support the recommendations of the Mississippi Technology Alliance to:

- Create science and technology internships for students and faculty with businesses in critical technology fields, helping to attract and retain leading researchers and graduates;
- Provide incentives for university researchers to work with business and industry on research and development.

In addition:

- Mississippi colleges and universities should adopt tenure and promotion policies that reward faculty for work with the private sector, and should maintain flexible compensation policies that do not penalize faculty for engaging in such arrangements.

INITIATIVE 6B: Develop proactive partnerships with business and industry that will enable Mississippi colleges and universities to become full partners in economic development.

Mississippi needs to concentrate its research investments at its designated research universities in order to maintain a critical mass of resources. But the institutions whose primary mission is teaching also have an important role to play in economic development. Proven strategies include assigning advanced business and technology students to work with local businesses on practical problems, hosting seminars and workshops relevant to

Priority Six Lead Agency: The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning

Priority Partners: The Office of the Governor and legislative leaders, Mississippi doctoral and research universities, as well as private colleges and universities and the business community.

Benchmarks:

- **Raise the percentage of degrees in science, engineering, and technology in the graduating class to the average of the southern states by 2010.**
- **Double the dollar volume of sponsored research by 2005 and triple it by 2010.**
- **Increase the number of faculty engagements with local communities for research and community service.**

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regional economies, supporting technology transfer and information sharing, and conducting employer surveys to assess the level of satisfaction with college graduates.

INITIATIVE 6C: The state should consider matching private research investments.

The state should encourage greater research capacity and greater private sector research investment by considering a research fund that would provide matching state dollars for every private dollar (and in some cases federal dollar) raised. The fund would support research that affirms institutional missions, while also addressing the state's economic and resource needs.

Sustaining a public agenda

Sustaining commitments and strengthening accountability for the public agenda

Mississippi's policymakers, educators, and citizens must have the information they need to gauge its progress on this public agenda for higher education—and to focus resources on unfinished business.

The past five years have witnessed a number of serious studies of the relationships between and among Mississippi's education, workforce development, and economic development systems. Unfortunately, however, only a few of the solid recommendations that emerged from that work have been implemented.

What was missing? A mechanism for coordination among the education sectors, as well as a framework for sustained statewide policy oversight in order to gauge progress over time—and for academic leaders and program managers to manage for results.

Quick and easy fixes won't solve Mississippi's chronic education deficit. And this public agenda for higher education is too important to allow it to fade from view.

Mississippi's policymakers, educators, and citizens must have the information they need to gauge its progress on this public agenda for higher education.

Establish an education coordinating entity

Collaboration and coordination can boost efficiency, sharpen missions, create incentives for change, and ensure effective governance and lead to a better alignment of policies and practices to enable students to move through the educational system with greater ease.

During the course of this agenda-setting process, education leaders have begun meeting to devise strategies that will lead to greater cooperation and collaboration among the state's education sectors. The steering committee applauds these efforts and recommends building on this foundation.

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The governing boards of the schools, colleges, and universities must continue to address their unique responsibilities—but a coordinating body will enable them to meet their *shared* responsibilities.

Accordingly, the board chairs and chief executives of the Department of Education, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Institutions of Higher Learning, and the state's independent colleges and universities should join together to establish an education coordinating entity. The governing boards of the schools, colleges, and universities must continue to address their unique responsibilities—but a coordinating body will enable them to meet their *shared* responsibilities. The entity could choose to formalize its operations as a 501(c)3 public corporation. To help achieve the public agenda and ensure educational progress in others of shared responsibility, the entity should:

- Develop and update a collective strategic plan that emphasizes new avenues for collaboration and cooperation for achieving the public agenda.
- Regularly review P-16 issues affecting all three sectors, such as core curriculum standards and student expectations, in collaboration with the Education Progress Board.
- Review and try to resolve any differences over mission or service area duplication among sectors.
- Review proposals for new off-campus centers involving collaboration of local community colleges, IHL institutions, and private colleges. Make sure any new centers respond to clearly articulated needs and involve private financial support.
- Fund competitive grants to Mississippi colleges and universities for new activities that specifically address the public agenda and result in administrative and programmatic efficiencies. Priority should be given to collaborative projects between colleges and universities, the K-12 educational system, and early childhood education. Funds for these grants should initially be drawn from a pooled reallocation within each board's budget. Once these efforts show measurable results, the systems should submit a request to the legislature for a general fund appropriation that would be matched by existing system resources.

Create a Mississippi Education Progress Board

The state's leaders should consider coming together to establish a Mississippi Education Progress Board, through either an executive order or legislation. The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, the three executives of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior

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Colleges, and the State Board of Education, respectively, and three at-large members should comprise the board.

The primary purpose of the Education Progress Board would be to assess the efforts of Mississippi in educational improvement. In addition to annually assessing progress on the public agenda for higher education, the board should annually assess educational progress at all levels: pre-kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary. Such assessments should also include various indicators of state-level financial support. The board should have the authority to commission in-depth analyses targeting particular priorities, initiatives, or benchmarks that significantly contribute to the public agenda. Such analyses could be conducted by the education coordinating entity, ad hoc work groups, or the existing individual boards. The Education Progress Board should also review and make changes in the public-agenda priorities as circumstances and conditions allow. To ensure sustained focus at the top leadership level, the board should follow a "principals only" rule: substitutes may not represent board members at board meetings.

In addition to annually assessing progress on the public agenda for higher education, the board should annually assess educational progress at all levels: pre-kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary.

Citizen involvement will be crucial to any success the Education Progress Board will have. One option for expanding such involvement would be to create a panel with one representative from each of the state's 82 counties that would meet annually to review and discuss the board's findings and priorities.

For its annual assessment of progress on the public agenda, the Education Progress Board should hold public hearings and report to citizens on:

- The accomplishments of the new education coordinating entity for the Board of Education, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Institutions of Higher Learning, and private colleges and universities. Each of those entities will detail their individual and collective actions on the public agenda priorities—and on educational progress in general.
- An independent review of progress on the public agenda from a third party such as the Southern Regional Education Board, the Education Commission of the States, or other independent entity.

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Higher education leadership for change

If higher education is to be successful in helping to raise educational aspirations, improving education at other levels, educating the state's workforce, expanding research essential for the state's economy, as well as in implementing the several other initiatives suggested in this agenda, it will have to do so with few additional resources. Thus the Steering Committee's priorities do not require a significant outlay of new funds. Although the task will not be easy, other states have been successful in marshalling the resources of their colleges and universities under the same circumstances. We have learned that those states have had strong leadership and new partnerships that leverage existing resources, and have also made the following three fundamental changes in the way they lead and manage their higher-education systems.

- First, the systems operate at unusually high levels of efficiency with minimal levels of duplication of administrative services and academic programs. Mission and program review, currently underway within the IHL, is a necessary action step to reduce duplication.

- Second, unnecessary regulation imposed by system offices and state bureaucracies have been eliminated so that colleges and universities are freed up to achieve their assigned tasks. Mississippi's system executives need to determine where they could do a better job at less cost with fewer regulations.

- Finally, educational system leaders set clear expectations for results. Working together, the policy oversight and coordinating bodies recommended here can assist the lead boards and agencies to clarify expectations and benchmarks for progress, helping to ensure that Mississippi meets its goals for higher education.

The most successful states enjoy exceptional leadership from their citizen trustees and from the executives those trustees hire.

The most successful states enjoy exceptional leadership from their citizen trustees and from the executives those trustees hire. The Governor should appoint the best of Mississippi's excellent citizens to serve on its higher education boards. The membership of those boards should know the state's colleges and universities, but they should represent all the people of the state. The trustees, in turn, need to seek, hire and support the most-qualified and the most-energetic executives to carry out trustee policy.

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appendix a: A snapshot of Mississippi today

The demographic and economic picture

- Mississippi is a relatively small, rural state, which anticipates only slight population growth.
- Mississippi's African-American citizens comprise 36 percent of the population, the highest percentage in the nation: double the southern and triple the national average
- Outside of the metropolitan regions, much of Mississippi is rooted in the old economy, with more jobs in traditional manufacturing, agriculture, and lower-skilled services.
- Historically, Mississippi's economy depended on natural resources and primary manufacturing and relied on low-cost, low-wage, and low-skill labor for its economic advantage.
- Mississippi has one of the lowest labor force participation rates in the nation, in part because many adults lack education, skills, and training.
- Despite a 32.5 percent increase in per-capita income since 1995, Mississippi still ranks last in both the south and in the nation.
- Mississippi's education and business leaders recognize that the new economy demands highly skilled technicians and professionals to retain and attract industries with the greatest growth potential—and higher-paying jobs.
- More than 17,000 manufacturing jobs were lost during one recent 18-month period, with major losses in the transportation equipment and apparel industries.
- The 1998 report, *University-Related Economic and Community Development in Mississippi*, the 2000 report of the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development, *Making Mississippi America's State of Promise*, and a number of other in-depth studies have laid the analytic groundwork to support economic and workforce development strategies that will leverage the state's strengths through a comprehensive mix of public and private investments.

Social and health indicators

- In spite of a declining poverty rate between 1995 and 2000, the share of Mississippians in poverty still ranks second highest in the region and third in the nation.

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- Mississippi has 26 percent fewer physicians per-100,000 population than the southern region as a whole, and 35 percent fewer than the national average.
- Although Mississippi's infant mortality rate has dropped in recent years while national and regional rates have risen, the state still has the highest national infant mortality rate.

Educational attainment in Mississippi

- Many of the economic, social, and health problems of Mississippi are related to the low education level of its citizens.
- Thirty percent of the state's adults are functionally illiterate.
- Mississippi ranks at or near the bottom of regional and national comparisons of math, science, and reading proficiency.
- Despite dramatic improvements since the 1980s, Mississippi still leads the region and the nation in adults without high school degrees.
- Mississippi lags behind the region and the nation in college degrees at all levels—associate, baccalaureate, masters, and professional.

Educational Attainment of Adults in 1999	United States	Southern Region	Mississippi
Eighth Grade or Less	10.4%	13.0%	15.6%
Some High School	14.0%	17.0%	20.0%
High School Diploma	30.0%	30.0%	27.5%
Some College, No Degree	18.7%	17.3%	16.9%
Associate's Degree	6.2%	5.8%	5.2%
Bachelor's Degree	13.1%	11.4%	9.7%
Grad/Professional Degree	7.2%	6.2%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of the Census

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College and university enrollment patterns

- Fortunately, fewer Mississippians leave the state for higher education than do college goers in the region and the nation.
- Only 36 percent of the high school freshmen in Mississippi enroll in college within four years compared to 54 percent in the top states.
- On the other hand, 65 percent of Mississippi high school graduates eventually enroll in college—higher than the southern region as a whole, and equal to the national average.
- In the 1990s Mississippi dramatically boosted the share of 18- to 24-year olds enrolled in college—from 19 percent to 32 percent.
- However, 41 percent of the state's white 18- to 24-year olds are enrolled in college, compared to only 26 percent of those of other races.
- Only 2.2 percent of Mississippi's 25- to 44-year olds are enrolled part time in post-secondary education—near the bottom of all regional and national rankings.
- The state's higher education institutions award the largest share of degrees in business management and administration (21 percent). Education degrees rank second (15 percent), followed by health professions and related sciences (10 percent).

Higher education spending

- Mississippi ranks below most states in the nation on per-capita spending on public higher education. But between FY 1995 and FY 1999, higher education in Mississippi—the third largest budget item—received by far the largest increase in share of state funding.
- Tuition as a share of family income in Mississippi is considerably higher than the national average, but slightly lower than the southern region.
- Despite recent increases, Mississippi's faculty salaries continue to lag behind regional and national benchmarks.

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Percent of Mississippi Appropriations by Budget Item: 1995-1999	Fiscal Year 1995	Fiscal Year 1999
Agriculture	3.07%	3.21%
Corrections	1.76%	2.69%
Higher Education	7.44%	13.14%
Public Health	2.54%	2.43%
Public Protection	3.21%	2.99%
Public Schools	23.97%	20.76%
Public Works	12.69%	11.10%
Public Welfare	31.29%	28.02%

Source: State of Mississippi Office of Management & Reporting

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Appendix B: Works consulted during the agenda-setting process

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. ***AGB Statement on Institutional Governance*** and ***Governing in the Public Trust: External Influences on Colleges and Universities.*** Board Basics Series. Washington, D.C.: AGB, 2001.

AGB Statement on Institutional Governance encourages all governing boards and chief executives to examine the clarity, coherence, and effectiveness of their institutions' governance structures, policies, and practices. *Governing in the Public Trust* addresses the need for all higher education leaders to thoughtfully consider the perspectives of external voices, while resisting purely political or ideological agendas.

_____. ***Bridging the Gap Between State Government and Public Higher Education.*** Washington, D.C.: AGB, 1998.

Examines the condition of academic governance, focusing on how state political and education leaders gauge the performance of governing boards. The report identifies needed reforms in the way governing boards function on behalf of taxpayers and their institutions, calling for national and state dialogues on these issues.

_____. Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance. ***State Governance Action Report.*** Washington, D.C.: AGB, 2001. www.centerforgovernance.net

Updated online in Autumn 2001, the *Action Report* summarizes recent and pending legislative, executive, and citizen action affecting issues of public higher education governance, trusteeship, and institution-related foundations.

Brandon, Richard N., Sharon Lynn Kagan, and Jutta M. Joesch. ***Design Choices: Universal Financing for Early Care and Education.*** Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Human Services Policy Center, 2000.

Describes an evolving computer model to compare different financing approaches for early care and education.

Carnevale, Anthony P., and Donna Desrochers. ***Getting Down to Business: Matching Welfare Recipients' Skills to Jobs that Train.*** Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1999.

Focuses on the skills of welfare recipients, using the most recent data from the National Adult Literacy Survey. The report estimates the hours of education and training necessary to move recipients into jobs with earnings, training, and a future, and matches those skills with the skills required for jobs projected through 2006.

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Carnevale, Anthony P., and Richard A. Fry. ***Economics, Demography, and the Future of Higher Education.*** . Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 2001. www.nga.org/cda/files/HIGHEREDDEMOECON.pdf

Focuses on helping minority and low-income youth gain access to postsecondary education, helping higher education institutions accommodate them, and finding ways to make the enterprise more affordable. The report also estimates the potential benefits to each state's total personal income and tax revenues of improving educational opportunities.

Carnevale, Anthony P., Kathleen Reich, Neal C. Johnson, and Kathleen Sylvester. ***A Piece of the Puzzle: How States Can Use Education to Make Work Pay for Welfare Recipients.*** Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 2000. www.span-online.org/puzzle.pdf

Identifies the front-line lessons learned on the role of education in the next phase of welfare reform, through dialogue with leading welfare administrators, educators, business people, and current and former welfare recipients.

Dingerson, M., H. Sloan, and N. Wilson. ***University Related Economic and Community Development in Mississippi.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 1998.

Examines the role that higher education should play in the economic development in Mississippi, urging new partnerships between businesses and higher education institutions and systems in Mississippi.

Education Commission of the States. ***Starting Early, Starting Now; A Policymaker's Guide to Early Care & Education and School Successes.*** Denver, CO: 2001.

Released at ECS's 2001 National Forum at the conclusion of a year of study, this succinct report discusses recent research on, and state initiatives in, early childhood education.

Institutions of Higher Learning. ***IHL System Profile. A Report from the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 2000.

A data compendium addressing a broad array of education indicators including full-time undergraduate and graduate enrollment, headcounts, budget information and southern states comparative data.

_____. ***Mississippi Adult Learners as Lifelong Learners.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 2001.

Identifies all of Mississippi's public university on-campus and off-campus programs designed to provide educational opportunities to adult workers.

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_____. ***Plan of Excellence: IHL System Strategic Plan. Accountability Measures: Pilot Study.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 2000.

Recommends an annual priority setting and accountability measure system to strengthen educational, economic, and societal well-being.

_____. ***Update on Mississippi's Long Range Economic Development Planning Effort.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL.

A status report on the Legislative Budget Committee's 1999 priority recommendations for long-range economic development: consolidating all work-force training funds, increasing high school graduates' workforce readiness, implementing a regionally based statewide strategic resources plan, gauging the economic impacts of gaming, and implementing a technology action plan.

Institutions of Higher Learning Center for Policy Research and Planning. ***Beyond the Millennium: Workforce Development in Mississippi.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 1998.

Addresses Mississippi's economy, focusing on worker skills and employer needs.

_____. ***Long-Range Economic Development Plan for Mississippi.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL.

Addresses the active role states should play in training and educating their workforces, with an emphasis on linking economic development and higher education institutions.

_____. ***Mississippi Economic Review and Outlook.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 1999, 2000, 2001.

A comprehensive periodic assessment of the national economic outlook and its interaction with the Mississippi economy.

_____. ***Mississippi: Handbook of Selected Data.*** Jackson, Mississippi: IHL, 1999.

A comprehensive compilation of demographic, education, income, employment, transportation and related data, including county, statewide, and national comparative information.

The Millennium Group. ***Building a New Workforce for a New Century, A Report of the Millennium Group to the People of Mississippi.*** Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Community College Foundation, 1993.

Examines Mississippi's educational and workforce development systems, and makes a number of specific recommendations for strengthening them to improve workforce readiness and economic benefits.

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Mississippi Future Net. ***The Next Generation.*** Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Future Net, 2000.

This report by MFN, a public/private partnership whose mission is to grow the state's technology-based businesses, makes recommendations designed to build the capacity of Mississippi and its educational institutions to enhance economic competitiveness.

Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development. ***Making Mississippi America's State of Promise.*** Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development, 2000.

Identifies the potential contributions of education, training, infrastructure improvements and governmental streamlining to strengthened economic development.

Mullins, Andrew P., Jr. ***Building Consensus: A History of the Passage of the Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982.*** Waynesboro, Mississippi: News Publishing, 1992.

Traces the historic education legislation passed during the term of Governor William Winter. Building a consensus for change for nearly three years, the Governor led the fight to enact sweeping legislation that included universal kindergarten and compulsory attendance for Mississippi public schools.

Governor Ronnie Musgrove and the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development. ***Unprecedented Goals, Unparalleled Progress. Making Mississippi America's State of Promise.*** Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development, 2000.

Identifies areas that could dramatically affect economic growth in Mississippi, including education and training, infrastructure and transportation, state government efficiency, public/private partnerships, and university-based knowledge.

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. ***Measuring Up 2000. The State-By-State Report Card for Higher Education.*** San Jose, California: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2000.

The first of a series of biennial report cards grading the 50 states on their performance in higher education—including all education and training beyond high school. Grades are based on each state's performance on 30 indicators within five categories: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and civic benefits.

Shaffer, S., T. Jackreece, and L. Horne. ***The New Mississippi: Political and Partisan Attitudes in the 1990s.*** Mississippi State, Mississippi: Social Science Research Center, 1999.

Reflects twenty years of polling in the state. The report addresses the state's attitudinal mix of social conservatism and economic progressivism.

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Appendix C: Members of the Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education

The Honorable Ronnie Musgrove
Governor
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Aubrey Patterson
BancorpSouth
Steering Committee Co-Chair

Reuben Anderson
Phelps Dunbar LLP

Daniel Ballard
Jackson State University

Harvey Barton
Barton & Williams, P.A.

Clinton Bristow
Alcorn State University

Fred Carl
Viking Range

David Cole
Itawamba Community College

Bill Crawford
President
Institutions of Higher Learning
Board of Trustees

Billy Crews
Journal Publishing Company

Charles Doty
Lextron Corporation

Angie Dvorak
Mississippi Technology Alliance

Bill Farmer
Time Warner Cable

The Honorable Tim Ford
Speaker, Mississippi House of Representatives

Ricki Garrett
IHL Board of Trustees

Bryce Griffis
Vice President, IHL Board of Trustees

Matthew Holleman
Mississippi Valley Gas Company

Bill Hunsberger
The *Clarion-Ledger*

Robert Khayat
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Den Knecht
Ingalls Shipbuilding

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Denotee Martin Contractors, Inc.

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Holmes Community College

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Virginia Newton
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Carl Nicholson
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Belhaven College

Michael Ratliff
Johnson, Hall & Ratliff

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State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC)

Bud Robinson
Millsaps College Board of Trustees

David Rumbarger
Community Development Foundation

George Schloegel
Hancock Bank

Carolyn Shanks
Entergy Corporation

Rowan Taylor
State Board of Education

Richard Thompson
Mississippi Department of Education

The Honorable Amy Tuck
Lieutenant Governor

George Walker
State Board for Community and Junior Colleges

Amy Whitten
IHL Board of Trustees

The Honorable William Winter
Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis, P.A.

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Members of the AGB Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance facilitator team for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education

Richard Novak
Center Executive Director

Neal Johnson
Center Deputy Executive Director

Terrence MacTaggart
Center Senior Fellow

Joseph Burke
Director, Higher Education Program
Rockefeller Institute of Government
State University of New York

Darryl Greer
Executive Director
New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities

The Steering Committee and facilitator team acknowledge the generous contributions of the educators, business people, and policy leaders from Mississippi and across the nation to *Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education*.

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About AGB and the Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance

Facilitators of the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges is dedicated to strengthening the performance of citizen boards of public and private higher education. By serving as a continuing-education resource to trustees and boards and by contributing to effective working relationships between boards and chief executives, AGB seeks to strengthen the governance of higher education institutions.

Currently, some 1,190 boards (which hold policy making responsibility for 1,800 colleges, universities and other educational organizations) are members of AGB. Included are boards of four-year and two-year public and independent colleges and universities, professional schools, seminaries and theological schools; boards of separately incorporated foundations affiliated with public colleges and universities; boards of statewide higher education coordination and planning agencies; advisory boards of institutions or campuses within multicampus systems; and governing boards of independent K-12 schools. AGB serves 34,000 individuals, including board members, presidents, and senior administrators.

The AGB Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance promotes improved communication among leaders in higher education, state government, and others who are working to make higher education governance more efficient, effective, and accountable. The Center serves as a facilitator, convenor, and provider of consulting services and technical assistance on matters affecting higher education governance, trusteeship, and institution-related foundations.

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"We foresee a future where Mississippians and their fellow Americans share a view of Mississippi as the state of promise and opportunity.

"The Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education has worked hard to identify what all of higher education—public and private, two-year and four-year institutions—can do to advance the competitiveness of our state and to improve the quality of life of our people.

"Through this package of priorities and initiatives, our intention is to provide a shared framework for educational, economic, and social progress."

—The Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education
January 2002

For more information,
visit **www.mississippi.gov** or **www.centerforgovernance.net**

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